American Heart Month

Heart disease can affect both younger and older adults. According to the CDC, half of all Americans have at least one risk factor.

**Risk factors include:**

- High blood pressure– uncontrolled high blood pressure is one of the biggest risk
- High blood cholesterol– unhealthy levels are attributed to having diabetes, obesity, smoking, and not exercising enough
- Smoking– damages blood vessels
- Obesity– extra weight stresses the heart
- Diabetes– causes a build up of sugar in the blood, resulting in damaged blood vessels and nerves
- Lack of physical activity– leads to unhealthy heart and blood vessels
- Unhealthy eating patterns– too much sodium increases blood pressure, while trans and saturated fats, and added sugar increases risk

Taking control of your health includes actions such as: managing high blood pressure and cholesterol, taking prescribed medications, eating foods low in trans-fat, saturated fat, added sugar, and sodium, stopping smoking if you smoke, and getting at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity per week.


“The way you think, the way you behave, the way you eat, can influence your life by 30 to 50 years”

- Deepak Chopra

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Tips to Lower Sodium

When shopping, compare the sodium listed on the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods and beverages.

Buy no-salt added, reduced sodium, or low-sodium products.

Instead of prepared or ready-to-eat, choose fresh or frozen poultry, seafood, and lean meats.

Limit the amount of dining out and opt for cooking at home more.

Instead of adding salt to recipes and dishes, try adding herbs and spices.

Sodium Recommendations

The 2105-2020 Dietary Guidelines recommend a sodium intake of less than 2300 mg per day, which is equal to about 1 tsp of table salt.

Herbs and Spices to Use Instead of Salt

Garlic—use on vegetables, meats, and poultry and in soups and stews

Vinegar—Use in soups, vegetables, meats, and poultry

Parsley—Use in salads, fish and meats, and vegetables

Rosemary—Use in salads, vegetables, and meats


How to Read the Nutrition Facts Label

Serving Size—how big the serving is

Amount of Calories—how many calories are in one serving size

Percent Daily Value—based on a 2,000 calorie diet, tells you how the nutrients in one serving contribute to your total daily diet. Helpful tip* if the DV has 5% or less than the food is low in that nutrient. If DV is 20% or more, than the food is high in that nutrient

Nutrients—Tells you the major nutrients and how much is in one serving.

Nutrition Facts
8 servings per container
Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)

Amount per serving
Calories 230

Total Fat 8g 10%
Saturated Fat 1g 5%
Trans Fat 0g
Cholesterol 0mg 0%
Sodium 160mg 7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g 13%
Dietary Fiber 4g 14%
Total Sugars 12g
Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%

Protein 3g

Vitamin D 2mcg 10%
Calcium 260mg 20%
Iron 8mg 45%
Potassium 240mg 6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.
Common food claims on packages

**Low calorie**—less than 40 calories per serving

**Low cholesterol**—20 mg or less of cholesterol per serving and 2 gm or less of saturated fat per serving

**Reduced**—25% less of a nutrient that is specified or 25% less calories than the usual product

**Calorie free**—less than 5 calories per serving

**Fat free/sugar free**—less than 1/2g of fat or sugar per serving

**Low sodium**—140 mg or less of sodium per serving

**Good source of**—has at least 10% of the DV of a specified nutrient per serving

February 17th– Random Act of Kindness

Kindness is teachable and contagious.

Kindness increases: the love hormone, lifespan, energy, happiness, and pleasure

Kindness decreases: pain, depression, stress, blood pressure, and anxiety

For more information visit: https://www.dartmouth.edu/wellness/emotional/rakhealthfacts.pdf

Easy Ways to Practice Kindness

Smile, Pay It Forward, hold doors open, pay compliments, really listen to someone, say “thank you” and “please”, & volunteer your time

Additional Resources

https://www.choosemyplate.gov/eathealthy/sodium
https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/guide-older-adults-using-nutrition-facts-label
https://www.huffpost.com/entry/40-simple-ways-to-practice-